

King of the gods

As polytheistic systems evolve, there is a tendency for one deity, usually male, to achieve preeminence as **king of the gods**. This tendency can parallel the growth of hierarchical systems of political power in which a monarch eventually comes to assume ultimate authority for human affairs. Other gods come to serve in a Divine Council or pantheon – such subsidiary courtier-deities are usually linked by family ties from the union of a single husband or wife, or else from an androgynous divinity who is responsible for the creation.

Historically, subsequent social events, such as invasions or shifts in power structures, can cause the previous king of the gods to be displaced by a new divinity, who assumes the displaced god's attributes and functions. Frequently the king of the gods has at least one wife who is the queen of the gods.

According to feminist theories of the replacement of original matriarchies by patriarchies, male sky gods tend to supplant female earth goddesses and achieve omnipotence.^[1]

There is also a tendency for kings of the gods to assume more and more importance, syncretistically assuming the attributes and functions of lesser divinities, who come to be seen as aspects of the single supreme deity.



Indra, the Hindu king of gods

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King of the gods in different cultures

Examples of this displacement of kings of the gods include:

- In the Mesopotamian Anunnaki, Enlil displaces Anu and is in turn replaced by Marduk.^[2]
- The Ancient Egyptian Religion Amun-Ra was the official deity of the Pharaoh and the people of Egypt.
- In the Canaanite pantheon, Ba'al (Hadad) displaces El
- In the Hurrian/Hittite pantheon, Teshub or Tarhunt or Arinna displaces Kumarbi.

- In the Armenian Ar, later – Aramazd.
- In Hinduism, the King of the Gods was originally Dyaus, later subsumed by Indra.^[3] Though Indra still retains the title of the *King of the Gods*^[4] and the Ruler of Heaven.
- In the Ancient Greek system of Olympian Gods, Cronus displaces Uranus, and Zeus in turn displaces Cronus
- In Norse mythology, Odin assumes the role as the Allfather or King of the Gods but Norse mythology has multiple tribes of Gods such as the Aesir and Vanir, and Odin starts off as only the leader of the former.
- Ancient Iranian Ahura Mazda of the Zoroastrians
- Dravidian religions^[5] The Supreme Being in Dravidian religion was usually Sivan in the form of Paramasivan and had supreme gods based on lands including Murugan, Kadalon, Vendhan, Kotravai, and Thirumaal

List of rulers of pantheons

The leaders of the various pantheons include:

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| ■ <u>Amazigh pantheon</u> : old: <u>Amun</u> ; new: <u>Poseidon</u> | ■ <u>Guarani pantheon</u> : <u>Tupa</u> |
| ■ <u>Algonquin pantheon</u> : <u>Gitche Manitou</u> | ■ <u>Haida pantheon</u> : <u>Raven</u> |
| ■ <u>Arabian pantheon</u> : <u>Allah</u> ^{[6][7]} | ■ <u>Hawaiian pantheon</u> : <u>Kāne</u> |
| ■ <u>Ashanti pantheon</u> : <u>Nyame</u> | ■ <u>Hindu pantheon</u> : <u>Shiva</u> , <u>Brahma</u> , <u>Vishnu</u> , <u>Indra</u> or <u>Brahman</u> |
| ■ <u>Australian Aboriginal pantheon</u> : <u>Baiaame</u> | ■ <u>Hittite pantheon</u> : <u>Arinna</u> or <u>Teshub</u> |
| ■ <u>Aztec pantheon</u> : <u>Huitzilopochtli</u> , <u>Ometeotl</u> , <u>Quetzalcoatl</u> or <u>Tezcatlipoca</u> | ■ <u>Hopi pantheon</u> : <u>Angwusnasomtaka</u> |
| ■ <u>Basque pantheon</u> : <u>Sugaar</u> or <u>Mari</u> | ■ <u>Inca pantheon</u> : <u>Viracocha</u> |
| ■ <u>Batak pantheon</u> : (primordial) <u>Debata Ompung Mulajadi na Bolon</u> ; (celestial) <u>Batara Guru</u> | ■ <u>Inuit pantheon</u> : <u>Anguta</u> or <u>Anigut</u> but only among the <u>Greenlandic Inuit</u> |
| ■ <u>Canaanite pantheon</u> : <u>El</u> , later <u>Ba'al</u> (now usually identified with <u>Hadad</u>) | ■ <u>Japanese pantheon</u> : <u>Amenominakanushi</u> , <u>Izanagi-no-Mikoto</u> , then <u>Amaterasu-Ōmikami</u> |
| ■ <u>Carthaginian pantheon</u> : <u>Ba'al Hammon</u> | ■ <u>Judeo-Christian pantheon</u> : <u>Yahweh</u> |
| ■ <u>Celtic pantheon</u> : <u>Dagda</u> (Irish); possibly <u>Lugus</u> (<u>Brythonic/Gallaeci/Gaulish</u>) | ■ <u>Korean pantheon</u> : <u>Dangun</u> |
| ■ <u>Chinese pantheon</u> : <u>Yuanshi Tianzun</u> , <u>Jade Emperor</u> , <u>Shangdi</u> , <u>Tian</u> | ■ <u>Lakota pantheon</u> : <u>Wakan Tanka</u> or <u>Inyan</u> |
| ■ <u>Circassian pantheon</u> : <u>Theshxwe</u> | ■ <u>Lithuanian pantheon</u> : <u>Perkūnas</u> |
| ■ <u>Dahomey pantheon</u> : <u>Nana Buluku</u> | ■ <u>Lusitanian pantheon</u> : <u>Endovelicus</u> |
| ■ <u>Dravidian pantheon</u> : <u>Sivan</u> , <u>Murugan</u> , <u>Kadalon</u> , <u>Vendhan</u> and <u>Kotravai</u> , and <u>Thirumaal</u> | ■ <u>Mari pantheon</u> : <u>Kugu Jumo</u> |
| ■ <u>Egyptian pantheon</u> : Old Kingdom: <u>Ra</u> . New Kingdom: <u>Amun</u> | ■ <u>Māori pantheon</u> : <u>Tāne</u> |
| ■ <u>Finnic pantheon</u> : <u>Ukko</u> , possibly <u>Ilmarinen</u> | ■ <u>Mayan pantheon</u> : <u>Hunab Ku</u> or <u>Itzamna</u> |
| ■ <u>Germanic pantheon</u> : <u>Odin</u> | ■ <u>Mbuti pantheon</u> : <u>Khonvoun</u> |
| ■ <u>Georgian pantheon</u> : <u>Armazi</u> , <u>Ghmerti</u> | ■ <u>Meitei pantheon</u> : <u>Sidaba Mapu</u> or <u>Pakhangba</u> |
| ■ <u>Gondi pantheon</u> : <u>Kupar Lingo</u> | ■ <u>Mesopotamian pantheon</u> : <u>Sumerian</u> : <u>An</u> , later <u>Enlil</u> ; <u>Babylonian</u> : <u>Marduk</u> |
| ■ <u>Greek pantheon</u> : <u>Zeus</u> | ■ <u>Miwok pantheon</u> : <u>Coyote</u> |
| | ■ <u>Muisca pantheon</u> : <u>Chiminigagua</u> |
| | ■ <u>Nabatean pantheon</u> : <u>Dushara</u> |
| | ■ <u>Ossetian pantheon</u> : <u>Xucau</u> |

- Persian pantheon: Ahura Mazda
- Philippine pantheon: Bathala (Tagalog), Kan-Laon (Visayan)
- Roman pantheon: Jupiter
- Sami pantheon: Beavi
- Slavic pantheon: Perun
- Turco-Mongol pantheon: Tengri, Tngri, Qormusta Tengri
- Vietnamese pantheon: Ông Trời
- Vodou pantheon: Bondyé
- Yoruba pantheon: Olorun
- Zulu pantheon: Unkulunkulu, Umvelinqangi

Characteristics

The following are the characteristics shared by virtually all Kings of the gods:

- **Creation:** Most of these gods derive their power from the fact that they created the world, formulated its laws and/or created life forms notably humans. Ex: Ra, Odin.
- **Dominion over the sky:** Many such deities hold control over all aspects of the sky, such as weather, rain, thunderstorms, air, winds and celestial objects like stars. They also control some aspects of earth like harvest, fertility, plants or mountains. Ex: Zeus, Indra, Perun.
- **Lightning bolts as personal weapons:** Commonly seen with sky gods.
- **Divine Wisdom:** Some Kings of Gods possess superior wisdom and clairvoyance, compared to most beings. Ex: Ra, Odin.
- **God of the Sun, Daylight or Celestial Fire:** Some kings of gods are associated with the Sun, as it is life giving and is a powerful symbol of order. They are said to be in charge of celestial fire which are purifying by nature. Daylight is also an important phenomenon as most events take place under its presence. Ex: Ra, Dyeus Pitr.
- **Conquest, Law, Justice, Order, Time and Fate:** Most kings of gods have the ability to control the events of battle and grant victory to those who deserve it. They are seen as paragons of law and promote order. They are seen as powerful manifestations of their respective civilizations. Some gods either possess great skill in war or tremendous physical strength. Some of them have some control over time and regulate it with seasons. Others have limited control over the fate of a human. Ex: Zeus, Odin, Ra, Indra.
- **Divine authority over other gods:** This may be because the concerned head of the pantheon is the father or creator of many gods and goddesses who swear allegiance to him. As a result, the king of the gods makes sure that all deities function properly, punish them for misdeeds, grant or take away immortality from lesser gods etc. Ex: Zeus, Odin, Anu.
- **Divine rival:** In some cases, there may be another god, who is equal in supernatural power and thinks he can do a better job than the current king. This often results in conflict, and in extreme cases, war. Ex: Ra and Apophis; Osiris, Set and Horus; Perun and Veles; Indra and the Asuras; Zeus and Poseidon; Cronos and Uranus; Typhon and Zeus etc.

See also

- Henotheism
- Kingship and Kingdom of God

References

1. Compare: Stookey, Lorena Laura (2004). "Primal Parents". *Thematic Guide to World Mythology* (<https://archive.org/details/thematicguidetow00lore>). Thematic Guides to Literature. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Publishing Group. pp. 142 (<https://archive.org/details/thematicguidetow00lore/page/142>)–143. ISBN 9780313315053. Retrieved

2018-10-20. "Myths from many cultures posit the original existence of [...] primal parents, or world parents, that most commonly take the forms of earth mother and sky father [...]. [...] the association of the father with the sky also signifies the ascendancy of the male that occurs with the emergence of patriarchal culture. [...] As agricultural communities are supplanted by warrior societies, the primal parent known as the sky father is readily transformed into another familiar figure, the omnipotent sky god who can also take the form of the sun god or the god of storms."

2. "Marduk (God)" (<http://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/amgg/listofdeities/marduk/>).
3. Agrawala, Prithvi Kumar (1984). *Goddessess [sic] in Ancient India* (<https://books.google.com/books?id=6FHvf59ceLEC&pg=PA47>). Abhinav Publications. p. 47. ISBN 978-0-391-02960-6.
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5. "Dravidian folk religion" (https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Dravidian_folk_religion&oldid=926342453), *Wikipedia*, 2019-11-15, retrieved 2019-11-28
6. Campo 2009, p. 34.
7. Hughes 2013, p. 25.

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